

REMARKS / DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-6, 8-19, and 21-23 are pending in the application.

Claims are amended for non-statutory reasons: to correct one or more informalities, remove figure label number(s), and/or to replace European-style claim phraseology with American-style claim language. No new matter is added.

The Office action objects to claims 1 and 6; claims 1 and 6 are correspondingly amended herein.

The Office action rejects claims 1 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph for use of the phrase "and/or". Claims 1 and 9 are amended to remove this phrase; withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office action rejects claims 1-6 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Snellgrove et al. (USP 5,001,396, hereinafter Snellgrove). The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Snellgrove fails to teach a coating layer and sealant located between an end part of a discharge vessel and an end closure member, as specifically claimed in claim 1, upon which claims 2-6, 8, and 22-23 depend.

Snellgrove teaches a sealant 5 and a coating 6. The Office action asserts that Snellgrove's seal button 3 corresponds to the applicants' claimed end closure member, and that Snellgrove's envelope 4 corresponds to the applicants' claimed discharge vessel. The applicants respectfully note, however, that the sealant 5 and coating 6 are not located between the seal button 3 and the envelope 4.

Snellgrove teaches that the sealant 5 and coating 6 are located between the member 1 and the envelope 4. Assuming in argument that member 1 is said to correspond to the claimed end closure member, the applicants note that Snellgrove's member 1 does not include a feed-through opening that is used to fill the discharge cavity, as also claimed in claim 1.

Because Snellgrove does not teach each of the elements of claim 1, the applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-6 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Snellgrove.

The Office action rejects claims 10 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Rigden (GB 1,361,225). The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Rigden fails to teach a method that includes gas-tight connecting an end closure member to a discharge vessel, filling the discharge vessel through a feed-through opening in the end closure member, and closing the feed-through opening by inserting a feed-through electrode through the feed-through opening and gas-tight connecting the feed-through electrode to the end closure device, as specifically claimed in claim 10. Claim 21 includes similar features.

The Office action asserts that Rigden teaches closing the feed-through opening by arranging a feed-through item in the opening followed by gas-tight connecting the feed-through item to the end closure device (Office action, page 8, lines 2-4). The applicants respectfully traverse this assertion. The Office action asserts that Rigden provides this teaching at page 2, lines 1-114; the applicant respectfully notes that the cited text does not address connecting a feed-through item to an end closure device.

Rigden teaches sealing the opening in the end closure device by pinching and welding the tube 11 that is used to fill the discharge cavity, and the Office action acknowledges this fact at page 3, lines 5-7. Rigden does not teach sealing the opening of the end closure device by inserting a feed-through item and connecting it to the end closure device, as claimed by the applicants.

Rigden teaches attaching an electrode 9 to the tube 11 before the tube is used to fill the discharge cavity (Rigden, page ; Rigden does not teach inserting a feed-through item into this tube 11 to close the tube, as asserted in the Office action in this rejection. Rigden's sole figure clearly illustrates that the tube 11 does not include a feed-through item.

Because Rigden fails to teach the elements of claims 10 and 21, the applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection of claims 10 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Rigden.

The Office action rejects:

claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Snellgrove and Rigden; and

claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Snellgrove. The applicants

respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 8 and 22 are dependent upon claim 1. As noted above, Snellgrove fails to teach the elements of claim 1, and Rigden fails to cure this deficiency. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection of claims 8 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Snellgrove or Snellgrove and Rigden.

The Office action rejects claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Snellgrove and Hendricx et al. (WO 00/67294, hereinafter Hendricx). The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The combination of Snellgrove and Hendricx fails to disclose a coating layer and sealant that are located and gas-tight connected between the end part of the discharge vessel and the end closure member, as specifically claimed in claim 9.

In this rejection, the Office action relies on Snellgrove for teaching a high-pressure burner, and Hendricx for teaching the use of a high-pressure burner in an automotive headlight.

As noted above with regard to claim 1, Snellgrove fails to teach a coating layer and sealant that are located and gas-tight connected between the end part of the discharge vessel and the end closure member. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection of claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Snellgrove and Hendricx.

The Office action rejects claims 11-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Rigden and Hendrix. The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The combination of Rigden and Hendrix fails to disclose a feed-through electrode that extends through a feed-through opening in an end closure member and seals the feed-through opening via a gas-tight connection to the end closure member, as specifically claimed in claim 11, upon which claims 12-19 depend.

In this rejection, the Office action relies on Rigden for teaching a high-pressure burner, and Hendrix for teaching the use of a high-pressure burner in an automotive headlight.

As noted above with regard to claim 10, Rigden fails to teach a feed-through electrode that extends through a feed-through opening in an end closure member and seals the feed-through opening via a gas-tight connection to the end closure member. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection of claims 11-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Snellgrove and Hendrix.

The Office action rejects claims 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Rigden, Hendrix, and Juengst (USP 6,194,832). The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 18 and 19 are dependent upon claim 11, and in this rejection, the Office action relies on the combination of Rigden and Hendrix for teaching the elements of claim 11. As noted above, the combination of Rigden and Hendrix fails to teach the elements of claim 11. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection of claims 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Rigden, Hendrix, and Juengst.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection(s) and/or rejection(s) of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

/Robert M. McDermott/
Robert M. McDermott, Esq.
Reg. 41,508
804-493-0707

Please direct all correspondence to:

Corporate Counsel
U.S. PHILIPS CORPORATION
P.O. Box 3001
Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510-8001